

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

PH0684341
FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 14 1978

NOV 15 1978

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Thomas-Wright Battle Site

AND/OR COMMON

Thomas-Wright Battle Site**2 LOCATION**S of Tululake in Lava Beds National Monument

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Tululake

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Lava Beds National MonumentX VICINITY OF1st

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

California06Siskiyou093**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**☒ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☐ OCCUPIED☒ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE**☐ YES: RESTRICTED☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☒ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region

STREET & NUMBER

4th & Pike Building

CITY, TOWN

Seattle

STATE

Washington

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.Lava Beds National Monument

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 867

CITY, TOWN

Tule Lake

STATE

California**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

THE MODOC WAR, 1872-73

DATE

1967☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDSDepartment of the Interior, National Park ServiceOffice of Archeology and Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

1100 L. Street, Northwest

STATE

WashingtonDistrict of Columbia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT

☐ GOOD

☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED

☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☐ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A broad basin of lava surrounded on three sides by a low lying ridge of similar material and culminating in Hardin Butte to the southeast. The surface is all black malpais scoria with a splotchy covering of native grasses and shrubs and dotted with a few scrub trees. The area appears virtually the same today as it did immediately after the Modoc attack on the Thomas Patrol in 1873 except that most of the remains of the men and their gear have been removed. A small pile of rocks marks the site where many of the bodies were found. A few stone fortifications may be found throughout the area.

Boundary:

The boundary marked on the map encompasses the basin and the ridges from which the Modocs attacked. The west boundary is 2,500 feet from the overlook; the east is 3,000 feet; the north is 2,000 feet; and the south is 2,000 feet. The boundaries correspond to those of Section 5, Township 45 N, Range 4 E.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

On April 26, 1873, nine days after routing the Modocs from their stronghold, Captain Evan Thomas, son of the Adjutant General of the U.S. Army, led a substantial patrol from Gillem's Camp on the shores of Tule Lake southward toward a hill four miles distant known as Sand Butte. (This hill is now known as Hardin Butte.) With him were the sons of two other generals; 1st Lt. Thomas F. Wright and 1st Lt. Albion Howe. All three of the men had seen action during the Civil War, but were inexperienced in Indian fighting.

From the beginning of the reconnaissance, their organization of the patrol party revealed that they underestimated both the danger of their assignment and the cunning of their foe. The patrol made its way through a more or less level area which consisted of an ancient eroded lava flow too irregular to call a valley. It failed to deploy skirmishers along the ridge tops at its flanks. When the troops stopped for lunch, they all drew together in a mass in an uneven basin at the foot of the west side of the hill, Sand Butte. The grass-covered butte itself rose about 200 feet above the men. To the south of their stopping place a low ridge ran west a few hundred yards from the base of the hill and then curved around north another few hundred yards. To the east and northeast of the butte and of the patrol the ugly tumbled rocks of the Schonchin Flow rose above the basin some twenty feet. The grassy, bush strewn, mile-wide area itself was dotted with humps of lava, depressions, caves, and ungainly rocks. Within a few feet of any given point a man could step from a position giving him a view of the whole area into a pit where he could not be seen from more than thirty feet away.

Here the Modocs attacked and their attack was a total surprise. Sheer panic and terror enveloped the troops, and most of those who didn't run for their lives lost them. The patrol suffered 41 casualties, 25 of them fatal and four of the units five officers died.

This disaster was the low point for the U.S. Army in their long campaign against Modocs. It would also prove to be the last great Modoc victory because it prompted the Army to place Colonel Jefferson C. Davis in command. In five weeks, Captain Jack, the Modoc Chief, would surrender.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Erwin N. Thompson, The Modoc War 1872-73, Lava Beds National Monument
NPS, 1967

Keith A. Murray, The Modocs and Their War, University of Oklahoma Press,
1959

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 510

UTM REFERENCES

A

10	6	2	2	5	5	0
ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING		

4	6	2	5	7	0	0

B

10	6	2	2	5	5	0
ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING		

4	6	24	0	4	0	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

41° 46' 33" 121° 32' 43"
41° 46' 33" 121° 31' 33"
41° 45' 51" 121° 31' 33"
41° 45' 51" 121° 32' 43"

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Erwin N. Thompson, Hist., Jennifer Hunt Watts,
and Laurin C. Huffman II

March 27, 1972

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Pacific Northwest Region, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

523 4th & Pike Building

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Seattle

Washington

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

MAR 4 1976

YES ☒

NO ☐

NONE ☐

Albert R. Rhodes
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ☒ National ☐ State ☐ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

Actg. Asst. Director, Cultural Resources
Director, Pacific Northwest Region

DATE

8/30/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Charles Adams
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11-15-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Marcelle
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11-9-78

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CONTINUATION SHEET Thomas-Wright ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The Thomas-Wright Battle Site is historically significant because, while it was a terrible defeat for the U. S. Army and a great success for the small band of Modoc fighters, it also proved to be the decisive turning point in the Modoc War. The slaughter revealed clearly the Army's poor leadership, poor training, and almost non-existent morale. Immediately after the disaster, newly-arrived Colonel Jefferson C. Davis took command of the troops, suspended operations, retrained the command, and restored morale and an esprit de corps. The deaths of Thomas and his men marked the climax of the modocs' victories; but never again would the Modocs succeed on the battlefield. Within a few weeks, the U. S. troops would pursue the last Modoc to the ground and conclude the war and a tribal history with an awesome finality.

This nomination covers the land on which this battle was fought and which is of associative significance in connection with the events described above, and land which is illustrative of the difficulties of a regular army, trained in the tactics of formal warfare, in a campaign of a guerrilla warfare type on the enemy's home ground. The form of the land covered in this nomination, including the natural scene, helps to explain how the Modocs could so successfully defeat professional soldiers. The site possesses integrity.